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## "OVER THE TOP"

(Continued from Page three)

ing the run, which tasted like varnish and sent a shudder through your frame, you wondered why they made you wait until the lifting of the barrage before going over. At ten minutes to four word was passed down, "Ten minutes to go!" Ten minutes to live! We were shivering all over. My legs felt as if they were asleep. Then word was passed down: "First wave get on and near the sealing ladders."

These were small wooden ladders which we had placed against the parapet to enable us to go over the top on the lifting of the barrage. "Ladders of death" we called them, and veritably they were.

Before a charge Tommy is the poorest of men. There is never any pushing or crowding to be first up these ladders. We crouched around the base of the ladders waiting for the word to go over. I was sick and faint, and was puffing away at an unlighted cigar. Then came the word, "Three minutes to go; upon the lifting of the barrage and on the blast of the whistles, 'Over the top with the best of luck and give them hell!'" The famous phrase of the western front. The Jonah phrase of the western front. To Tommy it means if you are lucky enough to come back you will be minus an arm or a leg. Tommy hates to be wished the best of luck; so, when peace is declared, if it ever is, and you meet a Tommy on the street, just wish him the best of luck and duck the brick that follows.

I glanced again at my wrist watch. We all wore them and you could hardly call us "sissies" for doing so. It was a minute to four. I could see the hand move to the twelve, then a dead silence. It hurt. Everyone looked up to see what had happened, but not for long. Sharp whistle blasts rang out along the trench, and with a cheer the men scrambled up the ladders. The bullets were cracking overhead, and occasionally a machine gun would rip and tear the top of the sandbag parapet. How I got up that ladder I will never know. The first ten feet out in front was agony. Then we passed through lanes in our barbed wire. I knew I was running, but could feel no motion below the waist. Patches on the ground seemed to float to the rear as if I were on a treadmill and scenery was rushing past me. The Germans had put a barrage of shrapnel across No Man's Land, and you could hear the pieces slap the ground about you.

After I had passed our barbed wire and gotten into No Man's Land a Tommy about fifteen feet to my right front turned around and looking in my direction, put his hand to his mouth and yelled something which I could not make out on account of the noise from the bursting shells. Then he coughed, stumbled, pitched forward and lay still. His body seemed to float to the rear of me. I could hear sharp cracks in the air about me. These were caused by passing rifle bullets. Frequently, to my right and left, little spurts of dirt would rise into the air and a ricochet bullet would whine on its way. If a Tommy should see one of these little spurts in front of him, he would tell the nurse about it later. The crossing of No Man's Land remains a blank to me.

Men on my right and left would stumble and fall. Some would try to get up, while others remained huddled and motionless. Then smashed-up barbed wire came into view and seemed carried on a tide to the rear. Suddenly, in front of me loomed a bashed-in trench about four feet wide. Queer-looking forms like mud turtles were scrambling up its wall. One of these forms seemed to slip and then rolled to the bottom of the trench. I leaped across this intervening space. The man to my left seemed to pause in midair, then pitched head down into the German trench. I laughed out loud in my delirium. Upon alighting on the other side of the trench I came to with a sudden jolt. Right in front of me loomed a giant form with a rifle which looked about ten feet long, on the end of which seemed seven bayonets. These flashed in the air in front of me. Then through my mind flashed the admonition of our bayonet instructor back in Blighty. He had said, "whenever you get in a charge and run your bayonet up to the hilt into a German the Fritz will fall. Perhaps your rifle will be wrenched from your grasp. Do not waste time, if the bayonet is fouled in his equipment, by putting your foot on his stomach and tugging at the rifle to extricate the bayonet. Simply press the trigger and the bullet will free it." In my present situation this was the logic, but for the life of me I could not remember how he had told me to get my bayonet into the German.

To me this was the paramount issue. I closed my eyes and lunged forward. My rifle was torn from my hands. I must have gotten the German because he had disappeared. About twenty feet to my left front was a huge Prussian nearly six feet four inches in height, a fine specimen of physical manhood. The bayonet from his rifle was missing, but he clutched the barrel in both hands and was swinging the butt around his head. I could almost hear the swish of the butt passing through the air. Three little Tommies were engaged with him. They looked like pigmies alongside of the Prussian. The Tommy on the left was gradually circling to the rear of his opponent. It was a funny sight to see them duck the swinging butt and try to jab him at the same time. The Tommy nearest me received the butt of the German's rifle in a smashing blow below the right temple. It smashed his head like an eggshell. He pitched forward on his side and a convulsive shudder ran through his body.



Taking Provisions to the Front.

gained the fear of the Prussian. Suddenly about four inches of bayonet protruded from the throat of the Prussian soldier, who staggered forward and fell. I will never forget the look of blank astonishment that came over his face.

Then something hit me in the left shoulder and my left side went numb. It felt as if a hot poker was being driven through me. I felt no pain—just a sort of nervous shock. A bayonet had pierced me from the rear. I fell backward on the ground, but was not unconscious, because I could see dim objects moving around me. Then a flash of light in front of my eyes and unconsciousness. Something had hit me on the head. I have never found out what it was.

I dreamed I was being tossed about in an open boat on a heaving sea and opened my eyes. The moon was shining. I was on a stretcher being carried down one of our communication trenches. At the advanced first-aid post my wounds were dressed, and then I was put into an ambulance and sent to one of the base hospitals. The wounds in my shoulder and head were not serious and in six weeks I had rejoined my company for service in the front line.

### CHAPTER XII.

#### Bombing.

The boys in the section welcomed me back, but there were many strange faces. Several of our men had gone West in that charge, and were lying "somewhere in France" with a little wooden cross at their heads. We were



Throwing Hand Grenades.

in rest billets. The next day our captain asked for volunteers for bombers' school. I gave my name and was accepted. I had joined the Suicide club, and my troubles commenced. Thirty-two men of the battalion, including myself, were sent to L—, where we went through a course in bombing. Here we were instructed in the uses of various kinds of hand grenades, from the old "jam tin," now obsolete, to the present Mills bomb, the standard of the British army.

It all depends where you are as to what you are called. In France they call you a "bomber" and give you medals, while in neutral countries they call you an anarchist and give you "life."

From the very start the Germans were well equipped with effective bombs and trained bomb throwers, but the English army was as little prepared in this important department of fighting as in many others. At bombing school an old sergeant of the Grenadier guards, whom I had the good fortune to meet, told me of the discouragements this branch of the service suffered before they could meet the Germans on an equal footing. (Pacificists and small army people in the U. S. please read with care.) The first English expeditionary forces had no bombs at all, but had clicked a lot of casualties from those thrown by the Boches. One bright morning someone higher up had an idea and issued an order detailing two men from each platoon to go to bombing school to

to manufacture bombs. Noncommissioned officers were generally selected for this course. After about two weeks at school they returned to their units in rest billets or in the front trench, as the case might be, and got busy teaching their platoons how to make "jam tins."

Previously an order had been issued for all ranks to save empty jam tins for the manufacture of bombs. A professor of bombing would sit on the fire step in the front trench with the remainder of his section crowding around to see him work.

On his left would be a pile of empty and rusty jam tins, while beside him on the fire step would be a miscellaneous assortment of material used in the manufacture of the "jam tins."

Tommy would stoop down, get an empty "jam tin," take a handful of clayey mud from the parapet, and line the inside of the tin with this substance. Then he would reach over, pick up his detonator and explosive, and insert them in the tin, fuse protruding. On the fire step would be a pile of fragments of shell, shrapnel balls, bits of iron, nails, etc.—anything that was hard enough to send over to Fritz; he would scoop up a handful of this junk and put it in the bomb. Perhaps one of the platoon would ask him what he did this for, and he would explain that when the bomb exploded these bits would fly about and kill or wound any German hit by same; the questioner would immediately pull a button off his tunic and hand it to the bomb maker with a "Well, blame me, send this over as a souvenir," or another Tommy would volunteer an old rusty and broken jackknife; both would be accepted and inserted.

Then the professor would take another handful of mud and fill the tin, after which he would punch a hole in the lid of the tin and put it over the top of the bomb, the fuse sticking out. Then perhaps he would tightly wrap wire around the outside of the tin, and the bomb was ready to send over to Fritz with Tommy's compliments.

A piece of wood about four inches wide had been issued. This was to be strapped on the left forearm by means of two leather straps and was like the side of a match box; it was called a "striker." There was a tip like the head of a match on the fuse of the bomb. To ignite the fuse, you had to rub it on the "striker," just the same as striking a match. The fuse was timed to five seconds or longer. Some of the fuses issued in those days would burn down in a second or two, while others would "sizz" for a week before exploding. Back in Blighty the munition workers weren't quite up to snuff, the way they are now. If the fuse took a notion to burn too quickly they generally buried the bomb maker next day. So making bombs could not be called a "cushy" or safe job.

After making several bombs the professor instructed the platoon in throwing them. He takes a "jam tin" from the fire step, trembling a little, because it is nervous work, especially when new at it, lights the fuse on his striker. The fuse begins to "sizz" and sputter and a spiral of smoke, like that from a smoldering rag, rises from it. The platoon splits in two and ducks around the traverse nearest to them. They don't like the looks and sound of the burning fuse. When that fuse begins to smoke and "sizz" you want to say good-by to it as soon as possible, so Tommy with all his might chucks it over the top and crouches against the parapet, waiting for the explosion.

Lots of times in bombing the "jam tin" would be picked up by the Germans, before it exploded, and thrown back at Tommy with dire results.

After a lot of men went West in this manner an order was issued, reading something like this:

"To all ranks in the British army: After lighting the fuse and before throwing the jam-tin bomb, count slowly one, two, three!"

This in order to give the fuse time enough to burn down, so that the bomb would explode before the Germans could throw it back.

Tommy read the order—he reads them all, but after he ignited the fuse and it began to smoke—orders were forgotten, and away she went in record time and back she came to the further discomfort of the thrower.

count, "one hundred" two hundred! three hundred!" But Tommy didn't care if the order read to count up to a thousand by quarters, he was going to get rid of that "jam tin," because from experience he had learned not to trust it.

When the powers that be realized that they could not change Tommy they decided to change the type of bomb and did so—substituting the "hair brush," the "cricket ball," and later the Mills bomb.

The standard bomb used in the British army is the "Mills." It is about the shape and size of a large lemon. Although not actually a lemon, Fritz insists that it is; perhaps he judges it by the havoc caused by its explosion. The Mills bomb is made of steel, the outside of which is corrugated into 48 small squares, which, upon the explosion of the bomb, scatter in a wide area, wounding or killing any Fritz who is unfortunate enough to be hit by one of the flying fragments.

Although a very destructive and efficient bomb the "Mills" has the confidence of the thrower, in that he knows it will not explode until released from his grip.

It is a mechanical device, with a lever, fitted into a slot at the top, which extends half way around the circumference and is held in place at the bottom by a fixing pin. In this pin there is a small metal ring, for the purpose of extracting the pin when ready to throw.

You do not throw a bomb the way a baseball is thrown, because, when in a narrow trench, your hand is liable to strike against the parapet, traverse or parapet, and then down goes the bomb, and, in a couple of seconds or so, up goes Tommy.

In throwing, the bomb and lever are grasped in the right hand, the left foot is advanced, knee stiff, about one and a half its length to the front, while the right leg, knee bent, is carried slightly to the right. The left arm is extended at an angle of 45 degrees, pointing in the direction the bomb is to be thrown. This position is similar to that of shot putting, only that the right arm is extended downward. Then you hurl the bomb from you with an overhead bowling motion, the same as in cricket, throwing it fairly high in the air, this in order to give the fuse a chance to burn down so that when the bomb lands, it immediately explodes and gives the Germans no time to scamper out of its range or to return it.

As the bomb leaves your hand, the lever, by means of a spring, is projected into the air and falls harmlessly to the ground a few feet in front of the bomber.

When the lever flies off it releases a strong spring, which forces the firing pin into a percussion cap. This ignites the fuse, which burns down and sets off the detonator, charged with fulminate of mercury, which explodes the main charge of ammonal.

The average British soldier is not an expert at throwing; it is a new game to him, therefore the Canadians and Americans, who have played baseball from the kindergarten up, take naturally to bomb throwing and excel in this art. A six-foot English bomber will stand in awe of silence when he sees a little five-foot-nothing Canadian outdistance his throw by several yards. I have read a few war stories of bombing, where baseball pitchers curved their bombs when throwing them, but a pitcher who can do this would make "Christy" Mathewson look like a piker, and is losing valuable time playing in the European War bush league, when he would be able to set the "big league" on fire.

We had a cushy time while at this school. In fact, to us it was a regular vacation, and we were very sorry when one morning the adjutant ordered us to report at headquarters for transportation and rations to return to our units up the line.

Arriving at our section, the boys once again tendered us the glad mitt, but looked askance at us out of the corners of their eyes. They could not conceive, as they expressed it, how a man could be such a blinking idiot as to join the Suicide club. I was beginning to feel sorry that I had become a member of said club, and my life to me appeared doubly precious.

Now that I was a sure-enough bomber I was praying for peace and hoping that my services as such would not be required.

(Continued Next Week)

## Estate of Edward J. Mathews late of Middlebury

STATE OF VERMONT.  
DISTRICT OF ADDISON, ss.

To the Honorable Probate Court for the District of Addison:

To all persons interested in the estate of Edward J. Mathews, late of Middlebury, in said District, deceased:

GREETING:  
At a Probate Court, holden at Middlebury, within and for said District on the 20th day of February, 1918, an instrument purporting to be the last Will and Testament and Codicil thereto of Edward J. Mathews, late of Middlebury, in said District, deceased, were presented to the Court aforesaid, for Probate.

And it is ordered by said Court that the 15th day of March, 1918, at nine o'clock a. m., at the Probate Office in said Middlebury, be assigned for proving said instrument, and that notice thereof be given to all persons concerned, by publishing this order three weeks successively in the Middlebury Register, a newspaper circulating in that vicinity, in said district, previous to the time appointed.

Therefore, you are hereby notified to appear before said Court, at the time and place aforesaid, and contest the probate of said will and codicil, if you have cause.

Given under my hand, at Middlebury, in said district, this 20th day of February, 1918.

CHARLES I. BUTTON, Judge.

## Estate of Minnie Thomas late of Middlebury

STATE OF VERMONT.  
DISTRICT OF ADDISON, ss.

To the Honorable Probate Court for the district of Addison:

To all persons interested in the estate of Minnie Thomas, late of Middlebury, in said district, deceased:

GREETING:  
Whereas, said Court has assigned the 15th day of March, next, at nine o'clock a. m., for examining and allowing the account of the administrator of the estate of said deceased, and for a decree of the residue of said estate to the lawful claimants of the same, and ordered that public notice thereof be given to all persons interested in said estate, by publishing this order three weeks successively previous to the day assigned, in the Middlebury Register, a newspaper published at Middlebury, in said district.

Therefore, you are hereby notified to appear at the Probate Office in Middlebury, in said district, on the day assigned, then and there to contest the allowance of said account; if you see cause, and to establish your rights as heirs, legatees and lawful claimants to said residue.

Given under my hand, this 23d day of February, 1918.

CHARLES I. BUTTON, Judge.

## Estate of Joseph H. Little late of Salisbury

The undersigned, having been appointed by the Honorable Probate Court for the District of Addison, Commissioners, to receive, examine, and adjust all claims and demands of all persons against the estate of Joseph H. Little, late of Salisbury, in said District, deceased, and all claims exhibited in offset thereto, hereby give notice that we will meet for the purpose aforesaid, at the late residence of the deceased, in the town of Salisbury, in said District, on the 15th day of March, 1918, and 12th day of August, next, from 2 o'clock p. m., until 3 o'clock p. m., on each of said days, and that six months from the 15th day of February, A. D. 1918, is the time limited by said Court for said creditors to present their claims to us for examination and allowance.

Dated at Middlebury, Vt., this 10th day of February, A. D. 1918.

Frank A. Atwood, {Commissioners.  
Paul S. Field, {  
Lillian E. Little, Salisbury, Vt., Executrix. 8

## Estate of Herman A. Peck late of Middlebury.

The undersigned, having been appointed by the Honorable Probate Court for the District of Addison, Commissioners, to receive, examine, and adjust all claims and demands of all persons against the estate of Herman A. Peck, late of Middlebury, in said District, deceased, and all claims exhibited in offset thereto, hereby give notice that we will meet for the purpose aforesaid, at the National Bank of Middlebury, in the village of Middlebury, in said District, on the 15th day of March, and 12th day of August, next, from 1 o'clock p. m., until 3 o'clock p. m., on each of said days, and that six months from the 15th day of February, A. D. 1918, is the time limited by said Court for said creditors to present their claims to us for examination and allowance.

Dated at Middlebury, Vermont, this 20th day of February, A. D. 1918.

Arthur G. Hinman, {Commissioners.  
C. Broxon, {  
Robert F. Pines, Administrator. 8

## Estate of Charles H. Keese late of Middlebury, Vt.

The undersigned, having been appointed by the Honorable Probate Court for the District of Addison, Commissioners, to receive, examine, and adjust all claims and demands of all persons against the estate of Charles H. Keese, late of Middlebury, in said District, deceased, and all claims exhibited in offset thereto, hereby give notice that we will meet for the purpose aforesaid, at the late residence of the deceased, in the village of Middlebury, in said District, on the 15th day of March, and 12th day of August, next, from 1 o'clock a. m., until 12 o'clock p. m., on each of said days, and that six months from the 15th day of February, A. D. 1918, is the time limited by said Court for said creditors to present their claims to us for examination and allowance.

Dated at Middlebury, Vt., this 15th day of February, A. D. 1918.

Harry L. Hunt, {Commissioners.  
John E. Weeks, {  
Executors: Floyd C. Keese, Middlebury, Vt.  
Franklin H. Keese, Ferrisburg, Vt. 8

## Estate of Amanda Whittemore late of Ripton

STATE OF VERMONT.  
DISTRICT OF ADDISON, ss.

To the Honorable Probate Court for the District of Addison:

To all persons interested in the estate of Amanda Whittemore, late of Ripton, in said district, deceased:

GREETING:  
At a Probate Court, holden at Middlebury within and for said district on the 11th day of February, 1918, an instrument purporting to be the last Will and Testament of Amanda Whittemore, late of Ripton, in said district, deceased, was presented to the Court aforesaid, for Probate.

And it is ordered by said Court that the 15th day of March, 1918, at the Probate Office in Middlebury, be assigned for proving said instrument; and that notice thereof be given to all persons concerned, by publishing this order three weeks successively in the Middlebury Register, a newspaper circulating in that vicinity, in said district, previous to the time appointed.

Therefore, you are hereby notified to appear before said Court, at the time and place aforesaid, and contest the probate of said will, if you have cause.

Given under my hand at Middlebury in said district, this 11th day of February, 1918.

CHARLES I. BUTTON, Judge.

## 1918

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## MARY PICKFORD SAYS:

"Wrinkles often come from defective eyesight. Have your eyes examined. Everytime you screw up your face in an effort to see better you induce wrinkles". [Answer to correspondent in Boston Post.]

Yours truly,

A. D. BARTER